

rible ghostly, and there was none o' that queer light around it I'd heard about in ghosts. But it was haggard and thin enough to be a spirit. The clothes hung on it loose, and the hand on the doorknob was like a skeleton, while the face, all that you could see through the black, matted beard, was white as sunken and fearful. The thing wasn't transparent, though, all except the hand—honestly, sir, you could almost see through that, it was so thin!"

HE paused, during which silence I hastened to make notes of his description of the apparition. The matter of the opacity of the object was interesting and unique.

"I'll admit I was nervous," he continued; "but I didn't see any particular reason for Peter doin' me harm, in flesh or out, so I tried to be natural, and said: 'How are you, Peter?'"

"How would you expect a man to be who'd been cut to pieces and killed by a railroad engine?" he asked, with a bitter laugh.

"Well," said I, "not havin' ever been through that experience, I can't tell offhand; but I always thought that what happened to us in the body didn't carry over to the next world. Does it?"

"It does and it don't," said he. "I suppose I'll get over it in time; but it was a sudden shock to hear—I mean to feel them wheels go over me, and—"

"Don't, Peter!" I says. "It's all fresh in my memory as if it was yesterday. How did it happen, anyhow? You was comin' to my shanty, wasn't you, to find out how the family was, and see about goin' home? Wasn't you?"

"I suppose I was, Tom," says he. "And then?"

"You ought to know," says I. "All I can tell is they called me out, and we found you all—well, you were dead, Peter."

"How did you know me?"

"The clothes. It was that new suit, and besides you had on the ring she give you—the one with your initials, that you never would pawn, you said."

"Don't, Tom!" he says, pullin' one of his bony hands across his eyes, and lookin' as near to cryin' as a creature of air and mystery could. Then there wasn't anything said for a minute, till he looked up and asked:

"Well, and what then?"

"We took you home, Peter, and your wife—"

"Yes, yes!"

"Don't ask me to tell you," says I. "I was almost cryin' myself, and couldn't see him through the mist before my eyes; but I seemed to hear him sobbin', just like he used to when he'd come home and I'd tell him how his wife had been pinin' for him. When I could see him again, his face was cold and set once more, and he said:

"I suppose they buried me?"

"Out to Chestnut Hills," says I, "in a decent grave. You would have no shame to see the place."

"Thanks," says he; "mebbe I will if I have time." Then he stopped and looked down and fingered at the edge of the long coat he wore. At last he looked up and said, like he was tearin' the question out of himself, "She—my wife—she is still—"

"He stopped; so I finished it for him, as I thought he meant."

"She is still livin' here," says I. "But not in the same house, or—like you left her. You know, Peter, after you died—"

I WAS goin' to go on and tell him the whole business of her struggles, and how she'd finally married George Lawlor, when I remembered that probably he knew all about it, anyway; and if he didn't it would be a more painful subject than I'd like to dwell on. Fortunately, he broke in:

"Don't tell me!" he says. "I can't bear to hear! I left her no money, and the baby just come, and—God, Tom! What a scoundrel!"

"Don't, Peter," I says, trying to console him.

"I can't help it," says he. "To think how I made her suffer, and the privations she must have gone through! But tell me just this, Has it wore off some? Is she happier?"

"I think she is very happy, Peter," says I, "if that'll do you any good."

"Thank God!" says he. "That's the first breath of relief that has passed my lips."

I interrupted the fish warden. "Did he say 'breath'?" I asked.

"Breath" was the word, Mister. I noticed it as strange at the time; but I didn't pretend to understand a ghost's way of speaking. Besides, he went on so quick I didn't have time to do much thinking about it.

"Tom," says the ghost, "I was a scoundrel, and I got what was comin' to me, all right! I ain't complainin' a bit, and I wouldn't never have come back after I was thought to have been killed—like you know I was—if it hadn't been that something pulled me. It was her, Tom. Even if I'd treated her so badly, there was something that's drew me back, and would have drawn me clear from the end of the world if I'd been there."

"Pity it didn't draw you before you went away!" I says.

"Don't say that, Tom," says he. "I've paid for my sins. And, by not bein' able to see her, or go near her, I'm payin' still more. You don't know what it is. Why, Tom, just for one sight of her I'd give my right arm—if I had it to give in the flesh!"

"Well, then, why don't you?" says I. "A spirit, I understand, can go anywhere and haunt anybody, can't they? How are you different from any other?"

"I can't explain that," says he. "There are many things you wouldn't understand. But there's one I can tell you. I couldn't go to see her without knowing where she lives."

"Queer ghosts that have to have directions pointed out to 'em!"

"That may be," says he; "but it's the case. I wonder, Tom, if you'd be a good fellow, like you used to, and show me where she's livin'?"

"I hesitated. I didn't like to refuse Peter what I'd done so often for him when he was alive—I mean take him home to his wife. But she wasn't his wife any longer now, I figured out, and the propriety of bringin' him to another man's house was doubtful to me. Again he asked me the favor, and I says:

"Peter," says I, "I don't like to refuse you anything; but there are certain reasons why I am not anxious to take you to see her."

"What are they?" he asked. "Do you think the sight of me would overpower her?"

"More than that," says I, "it would overpower somebody else. I mean her husband."

I THOUGHT the man—I mean the ghost—had been struck by a bullet, sir, the way he crumpled up in that corner and clutched at the side of the bunk to keep himself from falling. And the moan that left his lips was like the escape of a dying man's breath.

"Husband!" he says! "Husband! Who—who is he?"

"Can't you guess?"

"Not George Lawlor!" he cries. "Not that scoundrel!"

"George Lawlor," says I; "but hardly a scoundrel."

"My God!" says he. "When—how long after I was—"

"About a year she waited," says I, "and a proper time under the circumstances."

"A year!" he says. "So soon was I forgotten!"

"It was just like Peter Emmons or any of those worthless fellows to feel like that, Mister. They think that the more you abuse a woman the more she'll love 'em, and that when they're gone she'll kill herself grievin' over them. I was too disgusted to speak, and just looked at him, nervously bitin' his thin lips and flashin' his staring eyes about in the gloom of the shanty."

"So," he says, "she forgot me as soon as I was gone, and took up with that man! I might have known! But he sha'n't have her!" He brought his bony hand down on the edge of the bunk, and the bones rattled in it.

"No?" I says. "And why not, Peter?"

"Why not?" he says. "Because she's my lawful wedded wife."

"Can a ghost have a lawful wedded wife?" I asks.

"That was a clincher for him, and I drove it home."

"You are no longer Peter Emmons, Peter," says I. "You were killed by the railroad two good years ago, and you know it. She isn't your wife any more than she's mine, and you've got no right to interfere."

"He stood and thought for a minute. Then he said, 'You're right, Tom. But—but I would like to go and see her.'"

"Her?" I asked.

"The house, I mean," says he. "I promise if you'll

show me the place I'll do nothing to make any trouble. I'll just look. That's all I'm entitled to."

"And a good deal more," thought I; but I only said, "I'll take you, Peter; but how about if anybody should see me and you together? There's some in this town not so charitable about you as I am, and—"

"I'll give you no trouble," says he. "I'll keep in the shadows, and it's very dark outside, anyway. They'll never see me nor know me. Come on!"

"I looked out the door. It was very dark, as he said. I saw him button his coat far up around his scrawny neck, pull his head further down into his collar, and his slouch hat more over his face, so that only his gleamin' eyes showed—and they'd have shone through a brick wall! Then I put on my hat and said, 'Come!'"

IT was dark and lonesome up River-st., which ran along by the shore of the stream, and the roar of the dam made the sound of his footsteps, if they had any, hard to hear as we hurried along. He slunk into the shadows, dodgin' from one to another, and you'd hardly have known there was anybody with me.

"Not a word was said, and not a sound, until we passed the head of the court leadin' to the river, where he and she used to live in their little house, and then all he did was to give a sort of moan and hurry by a little faster. I was relieved at that."

"Finally we came to the street where she lived now with George. I turned the corner quietly, and he followed after, keepin' in the shadow of the big trees along the path, and I could hear him breathin' with excitement."

"The house was a pretty one, standin' back from the street, with considerable of a yard and some big trees and a flower garden. I didn't need to tell him that this was the place. Something else told him, and as he realized it he stepped to the edge of the fence and leaned on it, as if he'd like to vault over. I wanted to stand nearby and hold onto him; but I didn't care to be seen if anybody should come out, and so I stepped into the shadow of the tree he had left."

"The house had a bay window, facin' to the left, the side from which we were lookin'. In these windows there was a light, and we could see some one moving about inside, though the curtain gave us only a faint shadow of whoever it might be. Peter Emmons' ghostly eyes were fixed on this scene, and on a little strip at the bottom of the center window, where the curtain didn't quite hide all inside. From where he stood he couldn't make out who was movin' around, and at last he could hold in no longer."

"I saw him jump the fence, before I could say stop to him, and like a ghost he glided across the lawn, in long strides, till he had reached the edge of the window, where he knelt down, his eyes glued to the open space under the curtain. One of his skeleton hands rose up and clutched the sill, and with the other he drew his hat

further down over his forehead. I stood there at my post wonderin' what was goin' to happen. Would he make a noise? What would happen?"

"And then some one came across the room, and suddenly the curtain was raised quick. It was her! I don't know whether she had heard a sound outside, or whether she had felt that presence as I had felt it in my shanty here when it appeared to me. I only know that there she stood, lookin' out into the night, and the new baby hers and George's, in her arms!"

THE light of the lamp fell full on that upturned face of the ghost, crouching outside. I saw Peter rise up and give one look at her, and reach those bony arms out as if he'd like to grab her through the window, and then came a shriek from the woman that went clear to my heart. I saw Peter turn, flash through the darkness, and disappear in the shadows.

"It was a foolish thing to do, and none of my business, but that shriek called me. I rushed to the front door of the house and pulled the bell. I must have opened the door myself; for I found myself in the sitting room, in the room with the bay windows, and there she was on the floor, the baby cooing on her breast, and George bending over her, askin' her what had happened."

"He made me get some whisky from a shelf, and we forced that down her throat, and she opened her eyes. As they fell on her husband she shuddered, and it seemed to me as if she drew away from him in fear—fear, I knew, that she wasn't



"I Saw Peter Turn, Flash Through the Darkness, and Disappear."